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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Identical letters dated 24 October 2012 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write to you today to draw your attention to the serious deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, on all fronts owing to the illegal policies and aggression being carried out by Israel, the occupying Power, and its illegal extremist settlers against the Palestinian people. We condemn in the strongest terms the recent military attacks by the Israeli occupying forces against the Gaza Strip and the continued perpetration of terror and destruction by Israeli settlers in the West Bank. We call on the international community to act responsibly to address this very serious situation which is deepening the already grave human rights crisis being endured by the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation.

Over the past two days, Israel, the occupying Power, has continued to launch air strikes against civilian areas in the Gaza Strip, causing casualties and property destruction. Israeli occupying forces have launched missiles at areas in both the northern and southern parts of Gaza, including Beit Lahiya, Rafah and Khan Younis, deliberately targeting persons for death and spreading terror and fear among the civilian population. These recent Israeli attacks have killed four Palestinians and reports indicate that more Palestinians may have been killed in these brutal attacks. The names of those killed thus far are Ismail Issa Al-Tilli (26), Mohammed Al-Sheikh (32), Loai Abed Al-Hakeem (24) and Youssef Mahmoud Abu Jalhoum (27), who died of his wounds sustained yesterday, 23 October 2012. Moreover, these latest Israeli airstrikes injured at least a dozen other Palestinians, some of whom were critically wounded.

Recent threats made by the Israeli Prime Minister and other Israeli officials for more extensive military attacks against the Gaza Strip are exacerbating tensions and worries among the Palestinian people. Such threats of use of force should also be cause for alarm in the international community, including the Security Council in line

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with its Charter duty to maintain peace and security. We stress that the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza remains extremely vulnerable and in need of protection, to which it is entitled in accordance with international humanitarian law, particularly in light of the threats for more Israeli attacks.

Moreover, we must recall that the Palestinian people in Gaza are still, to this day, suffering from the trauma and negative repercussions of the major Israeli military aggression perpetrated against Gaza nearly four years ago before the eyes of the international community and from the vastly detrimental effects of Israel's ongoing blockade. In this regard, we recognize the continuing efforts of the international community, including international activists and civil society, in solidarity and support of the Palestinian people in Gaza enduring this unjust, inhumane blockade. We strongly condemn the recent seizure of the civilian boat, the MV *Estelle*, which had been sailing to Gaza to provide humanitarian aid to our people, and we condemn the violent, forced capture and detention of the international activists on-board and call for the immediate release of those still in Israeli captivity.

We must also call attention to the need for protection of the Palestinian civilian population in the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, who remain vulnerable to acts of terror, intimidation and destruction by armed, extremist Israeli settlers, in addition to the regular military raids carried out by the occupying forces in Palestinian towns and villages. In the recent period, such Israeli settler actions included more attacks on Palestinian farmers, including those trying to harvest their olives; the burning and uprooting of trees; the dumping of waste water from the illegal settlement of "Betar Illit" onto agricultural lands in the village of Nahalin, west of Bethlehem, damaging olive, grape and almond crops; the spraying of racist slogans of incitement on a Palestinian home and the burning of a vehicle in the village of Abu Al-A'sja, south of Al-Khalil; the seizure of 10 dunums of privately owned Palestinian land in the Qarout village, south of Nablus; and the assault of a Palestinian man by four settlers at a gas station near Bethlehem.

Of course, at the same time, Israel continues and intensifies its illegal settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in grave breach of international law and violation of United Nations resolutions. Once again, the Israeli Prime Minister is making provocative declarations regarding Israel's intentions to flagrantly continue pursuing this illegitimate campaign, especially in Occupied East Jerusalem, where the occupying Power's attempts to alter the demographic composition, character and status of the Territory have been most fervent.

Last week, Israel declared its intention to expand the illegal settlement of "Gilo", located between East Jerusalem and Bethlehem, by another 797 units, with the Prime Minister boasting about Israel's illegal plans in this regard. This expansion, if undertaken, would deepen the separation and isolation of East Jerusalem, the heart of the Palestinian State, from the rest of its natural Palestinian environs, clearly part of a deliberate colonization scheme by the occupying Power. And just today it was reported that Israel plans to construct 90 new housing units in the West Bank settlement of "Beit El" near Ramallah through a so-called deal made with illegal Israeli settlers in return for a "quiet evacuation" of the nearby "Ulpana" outpost. These latest decisions must be condemned and the international community must demand that Israel rescind such decisions and cease all such illegal actions. Moreover, Israel's ongoing cynical attempts to "legitimize" settlements must also be totally and firmly rejected by the international community.

At the same time, part and parcel of Israel's illegal colonization has been its destruction and confiscation of Palestinian property, which has also continued. Just recently, the occupying forces demolished, inter alia, several agricultural facilities, wells and sheds in the town of Idna, west of Al-Khalil; demolished a water well and handed out demolition notices for several Palestinian homes in Wadi al-Ghorus, east of Al-Khalil; and destroyed five artesian water wells and a spring in the village of Kufr Dan, east of Jenin, causing further harm to the Palestinian land, further exploitation of Palestinian natural resources, and further impairment of Palestinian livelihoods and access to water.

We condemn all of these illegal, provocative actions by Israel, the occupying Power, in our land. We reiterate once again that Israel's construction and expansion of settlements and settlement "outposts" and its construction of the Wall on confiscated Palestinian land are destroying the contiguity and integrity of the Palestinian Territory, destroying the viability of the two-State solution and thus destroying the prospects for the resumption of the peace process for the achievement of a final peace agreement. The international community has a political and moral responsibility to prevent this from happening and must act to uphold international law and its own demands on Israel, the occupying Power, to cease all of its settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, immediately and completely, and to abide by its legal obligations and international commitments, including under the Quartet road map.

The duties of the international community, including the Security Council, are clear and must be respected and upheld. The situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is critical and the human rights situation under the Israeli occupation is severe. The Palestinian people and their leadership continue to look to the international community to urgently take the necessary stand and action to bring a halt to Israel's flagrant impunity and its violations and aggression against our people and our land. We remain convinced that international action is imperative for sending the proper message to Israel, the occupying Power, that its transgressions of the law and United Nations resolutions will no longer be tolerated and that it will be held accountable and must abide by international law, just like all other Member States, without exception.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 435 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 8 October 2012 (A/ES-10/563-S/2012/747), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nadya **Rasheed**
Chargé d'Affaires, a.i.